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ABSTRACT

An introduction to the need for day camp activities and recreational facilities for the retarded precedes a discussion of the problems involved: the recreational needs must be defined along with the nature of the programs; locations must be found; the costs of transportation and salaries must be assumed and budgeted; programs must be flexible and properly evaluated; and parents must cooperate with recreational staff. Information is supplied concerning various day camp programs with special attention on the Kennedy Center and the Y.M.C.A. Camp Tepee. Also considered is leisure time recreation centering around a program to supplement the half day school with a half day recreation program. The activities are reported as successful and it is suggested that they continue and increase. (JM)

DAY CAMPING AND LEISURE TIME RECREATION ACTIVITIES FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED

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PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN
OF BRIDGEPORT, INC.

4695 Main Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606

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By

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PREFACE

A major aim of the efforts of the Parents and Friends of Mentally Retarded Children of Bridgeport has been to engage the community more wholeheartedly and extensively in services for the retarded. The association's own resources were committed to this end since its origin in the early 1950's. From that time on, the Bridgeport group itself provided many services and enlisted the interest, support and involvement of various outside agencies and organizations.

Its efforts during the 1950's and early 1960's have been heralded by some, both local participants and distant outsiders, as having in many instances shown the way to other communities. Wide recognition for achievements had been earned by the association.

The federal grant by what is now the Social and Rehabilitation Service of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was a further step forward in the allocation of financial and professional resources to extend and expand services for the retarded in Bridgeport.

The grant (RD-1435-G) under the title "Project to Demonstrate Comprehensive Community-Based Services for the Retarded" was awarded to "develop a model or plan of comprehensive services based upon the resources of the community and to show that the development of such comprehensive community-based services is the logical and most effective way of achieving a 'Spectrum of Opportunity' for the retarded individual."[1]

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[1]Progress Report, July 1964, RD-1435-G, "Spectrum of Opportunity" was preferred as a capsule phrase instead of "Continuum of Care," p. 1.

These extended and expanded services would thereby permit those of the citizens in Bridgeport who are retarded to gain opportunities and advantages that contribute to maximum personal development and to individual potential for successful personal, social, and vocational adjustment.

The basic principles underlying this comprehensive service approach to the "Spectrum of Opportunity" included (1) the further commitment of resources by local, state and national public and private groups, (2) the use of "normal operations" of the community into which services for the retarded would be integrated, rather than segregation into separatist institutions of sub-communities, (3) the provision of the "Spectrum of Opportunity" as a natural outcome and part of services in the community that are normally available to all citizens, (4) the coordination and patterning of services in proper time sequence so that appropriate services are available for different age groups and need categories, and (5) improvements in the range of vocational goals and aspirations.

It was intended that this broad conceptualization would be implemented in many ways during the life of the Project (1963-1968) and in subsequent years.

The achievement of the principles stated above was projected at the outset as a demonstration of the comprehensive model and its potential application to groups in other geographic locales concerned either with the retarded or with other types of handicaps.

The complexities inherent in any community require that the action-seeking organizations within it develop effective strategies for bringing about change. These strategies are based in part on the ideas held by those associated with the organizations about how the community is organized and in part on the resources they command or can influence. These ideas have consequences for action and are reflected

in the efforts actually undertaken to cope with unfulfilled expectations or blocked aspirations.

The realization of change processes is rarely a story of unalloyed success. Changes in direction, reformulations of goals, alterations in methods and techniques practiced, occur frequently and influence later efforts. It is noteworthy that pragmatic accommodations may be planned as part of the process of change prior to its initiation, but that the unexpected often occurs in the life of organizations.

The programs reviewed in this monograph deal with day camping and leisure time recreation activities for the mentally retarded. They represent one facet of the Project's goals and attainments and may serve as an illustration of the processes and efforts undertaken.

Certain of these efforts described below such as those involved in the creation of day camping extended over many years. The brief history in the day camping portion of the monograph recounts the ways in which the Parents and Friends association, acting on the beliefs that camping programs for the retarded should be developed, sought to enlist the help of various other community groups and cooperatively with such groups developed their own programs. From the belief came proposals for actions intended to cope with the community as the association members understood it.

The day camping program that is later described took in part a different form from 1964 on, with the initial efforts of the grant-supported Project (RD-1435-G). The earlier program had been totally operated by the association using facilities of other community organizations such as a church or grange. In 1964, however, the Project was to set in motion a process of engaging other agencies with the camping program in a new fashion. The object was to entice, so to say, other community organizations to include the retarded in their regularly operated programs. Thereby the

responsibility for operating programs would be assumed by independent associations or groups. Without special interest in the retarded, but with a willingness to include them in their activities, the Y.M.C.A. would serve as a prototype of what the Project generally intended as the pattern for change for the community as a whole.

Difficulties may readily arise in such ventures as are described below. Cooperation between individual organizations is perhaps at least as difficult to attain as cooperation between individual people. Thus, goals may never be actualized in precisely the manner initially intended. Cooperation in the use of resources may entail changes in actions of those who cooperate. The new patterns of behavior thereby developed may depart from the patterns first planned or proposed. Cooperation may in many instances involve change, but whether such change means failure and frustration, compromise and concession, or achievement and accomplishment, depends on the beliefs and efforts of those who care and of those who cooperate in varied ways.

I. INTRODUCTION

A major achievement of any organization with special concerns is the creation of the system or structure that permits the routine handling of their needs. This is especially critical in retardation services inasmuch as a backlog of unsatisfied or meagerly satisfied needs exists in many communities.

The retarded are particularly susceptible to discrimination and prejudice based on attitudes in the community which are deep-rooted. Isolated in the schools or barred from them, restricted or blocked from jobs, neglected in the informal social and recreational activities of their peers, the retarded face a compounded set of problems and need extraordinary help in solving or coping with them.

Parents organizations such as the Parents and Friends of the Mentally Retarded of Bridgeport, Inc., have been in the forefront of the effort to solve these problems. They have in many instances attempted to do so by developing their own programs which substitute for that which the community generally fails to provide. In many instances, these serve as demonstrations of achievements which other groups or organizations may support in part at first and then completely at a later date.

Such programs may be maintained by parents organizations in the face of apathy by the community and disinterest by other agencies and organizations. How long such a program can and should be maintained by the sponsoring organization is a question that has vital significance for a host of associations in the field of mental retardation and for private associations generally.

Day camping and recreation are an excellent example of the development of programs by a private association of interested people. This monograph presents a description

and interpretation of these programs and their creation. It emphasizes the ways in which these programs were formulated, how these programs began, the manners in which they were organized and funded, and the ways in which other organizations, private and public, have become involved in them.

Programs of this sort are necessary for the retarded for many reasons. The full life of all citizens requires adequate opportunity for diversion and relaxation, for play for its own sake and for the effects that play provides in self-development and personal growth.

Day camps and recreational activities, such as dances, bowling, swimming, and other athletics, arts and crafts, are available to most people as a matter of their choice. Individuals participate often in recreational and diversionary activities of their own making. Many opportunities also have to be developed, sustained and maintained by organizations and by associations for their members and for the public generally. Community-sponsored playgrounds, public swimming pools and parks, private camps, state parks, camping grounds and forests, all illustrate the wide variety of efforts that must be sustained by organized effort.

Given this environment for recreation, the retarded have the right to enjoy these opportunities as much as do others in our society. But in addition special needs exist. Some retarded require special equipment. Some require additional safety and other precautionary efforts to minimize personal hazards, such as in swimming and water activity. Programs may have to be modified to prove appropriate to the needs and problems of special groups of the retarded, and such changes may be substantial. Higher than ordinary ratios of staff members such as counselors to participants may be essential.

The appreciation of such needs and the desire to supply sufficient financial, personnel and other resources required

for them are likely to be highly correlated, particularly when those directly concerned with retardation, as parents are, believe that the general community fails to provide adequate opportunities or resources for the retarded. Parents associations, such as the Parents and Friends, are likely therefore to devote much time and energy to the manifold tasks of organizing programs and raising funds for needs particular to the retarded with whom they are concerned. Given their recognition that others are not covering the retarded in their programs and given their belief that something must be done, the simple next step is to adopt the policy that we must do it ourselves for our own.

In such a framework of ideas did Parents and Friends of the Mentally Retarded of Bridgeport embark some years ago on day camping and recreational programs for the retarded. This monograph presents an account and interpretation of these efforts.

The monograph highlights, first, the general kinds of problems which confront such efforts and which recur in different ways throughout. Second, it presents what is essentially a somewhat cursory history. The initial section of the history concerns day camping, and the second and final section describes leisure time recreational activities.

We wish to raise again the question presented on the first page of this introduction. How long such a program can and should be maintained by the sponsoring organization is a question that has vital significance for a host of associations in the field of retardation and for private associations generally.

We do not pretend to have conclusive answers to that question. The conditions that affect the circumstances of turning over a program and whether indeed that should take place at all are manifold.

Some may argue that a sponsoring association of private individuals who share particular interests and have a depth of feeling about a problem that cannot be matched by others should continue to deliver these services, for no one else can or will provide them.

Some may argue that it is the demonstration itself that special programs can exist which is the unique contribution of a private association, and that once the demonstration has occurred, the sponsors should seek to have other agencies and organizations take over the continuing responsibility and lasting financial obligations of such programs.

Certain programs may impose significant financial burdens on sponsors. Many may require the hiring of specialists, professionals and others, to implement and enhance the initial conceptualizations of programs and goals. These expenses and others that may be incurred for space (rent or purchase), equipment, utilities, and transportation may prove to be substantive burdens for sponsors. Assumption of these costs by others may be a striking achievement.

As public or other independent agencies prove to have programs and activities that can incorporate in part or in full the efforts of a sponsoring association, segments at least of the special demonstration programs may become incorporated into them. At those times, the sponsoring association may give up portions of its own program, find them transferred to other groups, and experience a sense of concern or of loss. The concern may arise because the new sponsors may not appear to the pioneers to have the same level of interest or of awareness as did the initiating group. The loss may be felt inasmuch as support of a voluntary association often exists in direct relation to the amounts of so-called direct services which it provides to its members. Older or earlier members may continue support of the association, while newer or prospective members may transfer loyalty and support to the current sponsors.

In the area of day camping, the Parents and Friends of the Mentally Retarded of Bridgeport ultimately transferred responsibility for those programs to a general social service agency in the community. The Y.M.C.A. now includes the retarded in its summer camping programs.

The highlight of this monograph is this transfer to a general service agency of a program that is of particular personal interest to an association of individuals with special concern for the group served.

It describes the evolution of programs and the processes and decisions that were made throughout the many years when the Parents and Friends operated day camping and recreational programs independently, though often in extensive cooperation with others.

It presents information about the steps leading to the transfer of the program of camping to the Y.M.C.A. and shows as well how the Parents and Friends association moved to the point of letting others take up the burdens which it carried for so many years.

It emphasizes, therefore, in this single area of services for the retarded how the retarded are now included in the general social system of the community, receive equal treatment and enjoy equal services.

II. GENERAL PROBLEMS

In organizing a program of recreation for the retarded, a variety of problems have to be confronted and solutions for these found. Some of these problems may persist throughout the development of a recreational program or programs. Others may be solved fairly easily and, it may be hoped, finally. Still others may be solved for a time and then reappear. In some forms, however, the following problems which were confronted by the Parents and Friends association may also occur for other groups that provide or attempt to provide for the recreational needs of the retarded.

(1) Defining the Recreational Needs of the Retarded

Before spelling out the nature of programs to fill needs, the needs themselves should be identified. These can include diversion, emotional outlets, physical play and stimulation, leisure time activities. In our society, the right to leisure exists for all, and the retarded should enjoy that right as does or should anyone else.

Defining the needs specifically requires attention to the amounts of leisure that anyone, retarded or otherwise, should have and wants to have. Is this on a weekly basis, a daily basis, a year-round basis? Do needs vary by season of the year, by level of impairment for the retarded, by the age of the person, by sex of the person? Does the provision of leisure activities permit moving out of accustomed routines, away from familiar surroundings, and into relationships with new and different individuals?

(2) Defining the Nature of the Programs that will be organized

Will the programs focus on educational experiences,

arts and crafts, physical activities, such as swimming, hiking, calisthenics, games? Are these group play or individual events? Will the programs include field trips?

Are the programs separate or integrated with recreational programs already established? Will the retarded require special facilities and staff with particular capabilities and in-service training as well as professional consultation? Is consultative help required from educators, social workers, psychologists, physicians, recreation specialists, or others?

Shall programs be organized on a day basis, such as day camps or after school or part-time such as once weekly? Shall they run throughout the year, during the summer only, or perhaps for limited blocks of time? Shall day camps or overnight camps operate during the summer?

(3) Finding and Selecting Locations for Recreational Programs

What sites and facilities are available? What organizations and associations must be approached in order to make that space available? What sites and facilities must be purchased or leased or loaned? What kinds of reciprocal services, such as maintenance, site improvement, or renovation must be performed if site and facilities are acceptable?

Changes in programs may frequently have to result from the nature of the site and facilities that are available. A cogent illustration from this Project was the use of the beach and swimming facilities provided by the City of Bridgeport, while the Y.M.C.A. facility provided a broader range of hiking and camping programs. Programs exist at both facilities at present, one part-time and the other on a full-time basis.

(4) Paying for Transportation of the Retarded

Who pays for the transportation for the retarded and

who takes the responsibility for conveying them from home to the site of recreation? This is a major problem, indeed a recurrent headache.

Do the parents assume responsibility for paying these transportation costs? Can community organizations supply funds or are public funds, such as from Welfare or School Departments, available? Are there any organizations that provide transportation per se? Can a volunteer group be established to perform these services; must drivers be hired, or will parents establish car pools and exchange transportation duties?

(5) Selection and Reimbursement of Staff

How are counselors and volunteers chosen and supervised? What training is considered desirable? To what extent do they require, for effective work, any special prior education or experience or in-service training and supervision for work with the retarded? What ratio of staff to participants is necessary and what ratio exists on the basis of recreational needs and financial resources?

(6) Introducing Flexibility of Programming to Provide Diverse Programs for Different Sub-Groups of the Retarded

Will the recreational programs vary sufficiently so that common or separate activities are deemed appropriate for the wide range of the retarded such as the physically handicapped retarded, the emotionally disturbed retarded, educables, trainables, and severely or profoundly retarded? Are differences in physical development and chronological age sufficiently reflected in diversity of programs? Do males and females participate in the same programs, or should separate programs be established?

(7) Budgeting Funds

Who provides funds for expenses of staff, equipment, supervision, food, and the like? Are these paid through parent fees, association funds, public donations and subscriptions, camperships provided by organizations, special solicitations such as dances or fund-raising affairs, or general United Fund subsidies?

(8) Developing Cooperative Relationships between Parents and Recreational Staff

How can useful communication, understanding and joint support be developed and maintained between the parents and recreational staff members? How are participants who may violate necessary rules and regulations, such as safety, handled? Under what conditions are the retarded expelled or suspended, and how are these understood and accepted by the parents?

Are adequate safety rules and regulations maintained in areas such as beaches and pools and are these understood by both parents and counselors or supervisors?

(9) Evaluating Programs in order to Improve their Usefulness

How is information about the nature of the recreational programs accumulated in a systematic fashion so that the careful appraisal of accomplishments and failures can be made available as a basis for improving programs developed later? Such evaluations can provide an invaluable resource for in-service training for recreational supervisors and for the sponsors and organizers of these programs.

Should daily logs be kept? Should weekly, monthly, seasonal or yearly summaries be prepared by various individuals associated with the programs? Should discussion meetings and seminars be organized, and if so, how often and with which participants? To what extent should parents of the retarded participate in evaluation of programs by providing information, judgments, or other expressions?

III. DAY CAMPING

The origin of the Day Camp program is said to have been conceived by an enterprising member of the Parents and Friends association. A privately-run program, independent of the organization, existed in 1955. On February 3, 1956, the first recorded action is mentioned in the official minutes of the Board of Directors meeting. At that time, a motion was made and passed that the association would provide support for a summer day camp program. A program had existed the previous summer in a limited but successful fashion. It was brought to the attention of the members of the Board as being a necessary and vital part of the services effort it could undertake. The private program in 1955 was the first day camp in Southern Connecticut devoted exclusively to the mentally retarded, according to the Board minutes, and this action accordingly represented a pioneering step.

With the advent of trainable classes in the community, together with the Kennedy Center Day Care Program for the various groups of mental retardates, it became apparent that continuity and reinforcement of on-going activities, both in the classrooms and in the program center, were vitally needed. The Summer Day Camp program constituted such a step toward continuity and reinforcement and met with obvious success.

In the ensuing three years, a similar schedule of programming took place at the original campsite, the Greenfield Hill Congregational Church. Use of the parish house and playground area was made available through the generosity of the pastor.

With the support of the Parent association as a whole, and the donation of facilities, the members of the association's committee that was established moved ahead with enthusiasm.

The camp activities planned by the Executive Director of the association were arts and crafts, athletics, nature and the creative arts. Parents enrolled their children in great numbers and encouraged many to volunteer their services for transportation and as aides to the paid camp staff of two supervisors and a recreation worker and to several volunteers. For a period of four weeks during summer 1956, thirty boys and girls attended a Day Camp Program from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., three days a week on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

The success of the program was its own reward, and the program continued along the same general lines, according to available information, in the summers of the next three years ending in 1959. This prompted the committee to open the program to more individuals and consequently it looked for larger facilities. After being informed by the Church that the facilities would no longer be available because of the development of its own summer nursery program, the association moved the Day Camp Program in 1960 to the Greenfield Hill Grange. Although the description of the site appeared ideal, difficulty arose during the initial summer because of housekeeping and outdoor maintenance problems. As a result, it was decided after a year's operations to move the facility.

In 1961, action was taken to secure the Easton Grange Hall and this met with success. The camping period schedule developed was from July 10 to August 18, and a five days-a-week program was started. The campers 'day lasted approximately from 9:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. The camp activities that year were directed by two public school teachers of the retarded, assisted by four counselors. The program included indoor and outdoor games, sports, arts and crafts, music, movies and special events.

Transportation continued to be provided and these costs were the only expenses for the parents. Various agencies,

in addition to volunteers, participated. The State Welfare Department and the Fairfield Chapter of The American Red Cross helped. Private livery was also provided by those parents who paid the cost.

In 1962, the association secured the services of a Camp Director and continued the program at the Easton Grange. The enrollment during the period averaged about thirty-five boys and girls. Although the camping season of 1962 was an apparent success, according to a member of the association's Board, major problems centered around beach facilities and the cost of transporting youngsters to and from the beach.

In 1963, the association, through the cooperation of the City of Bridgeport, moved the Day camp site to Pleasure Beach, an island play area owned by the City, upon which several cottages were located. This cooperation was brought about principally through the efforts of a Board member's husband, employed by the City of Bridgeport, who made the necessary individuals in the city administration aware of the way in which the area could be used by the retarded. This resulted in City approval of the use of the cottages and the beach for a camping site for the retarded, and in addition the City arranged for restoration and maintenance of the cottages for the season.

The change in location gave rise to a major parental concern, since the cottages were located near the waters of Long Island Sound. The possibilities of drowning were ominous in their minds. In order to counteract these apprehensions, the parents were assured by the association that an increase in staff and volunteers-to-child ratio would be maintained within this physical location. According to one statement of the time, "... the children were very happy to be near the water, but the parents complained because they feared that something would happen."

Because of the fears expressed by the parents as described in meeting notes, the camp site in 1964 was to revert to the Easton Grange location. A five-day program was to be undertaken for children under 16 years of age and its duration was seven weeks. The plan called for an experienced camp director and six counselors to make possible a 1 to 7 ratio to campers. In addition to these paid workers, volunteers contributed services. Trips were still to be arranged on a scheduled weekly basis to Pleasure Beach during the camping season, in order to provide bathing facilities for the youngsters. As a result of this added transportation, the Camp fee was raised from $10 to $13 for each weekly session. The records show that parents of enrolled campers were required to be members of the association.[1]

In June 1964, and again in September 1964, the association Board minutes show that the Y.M.C.A. and the Kennedy Center were formulating plans for a day camp program for the retarded to be conducted by the Y.M.C.A. This first step toward the involvement of independent community agencies in the control and operation of programs for the retarded was a key achievement intended for the Social and Rehabilitation Services Project that began in 1963 (RD 1435-G). In March 1965, after several meetings with the Directors of the Y.M.C.A. and the Kennedy Center, the Y.M.C.A. agreed to set up a program for retarded children at its Camp Tepee where camp programs had existed since 1950.

Confusion arose, however, over terms the Y.M.C.A. had developed in the proposal for camping programs for the educable or borderline retarded in the group ranging in intelligence quotients from 60 to 80. They were expected to be able

[1]In reviewing the Day Camp Program files, 1964 appears to be the first year in which any detailed records were prepared or at least placed on file. Appendix A consists of a summary of activities during summer 1964.

to function both physically and socially with their normal peer groups. When the "Y" staff learned that the Kennedy Center had intended a more diverse and inclusive program including trainable youngsters, they expressed some concern. Though the Directors of the "Y" approved a total program on a trial basis, the "Y" staff expressed a good deal of apprehension and concern about accepting the more severely retarded. Past experiences of the "Y" with a program for the severely emotionally disturbed held at Camp Tepee the previous summer left unfavorable recollections from the viewpoint of the staff, who apparently applied these memories and perspectives to the prospect of working with the severely retarded. Administratively, it was noted that some of the counselors had tended to devote more time to the emotionally disturbed children than to their own normal group and, while doing so, the counselors nevertheless felt very uncomfortable when dealing with these children. The emotionally disturbed youngsters had been housed near the younger campers and program scheduling became a problem, especially in the use of equipment which these children were not always ready to yield to others. In addition, there was some seemingly uncontrolled behavior on the part of these disturbed children and it had a deleterious effect on the normal children nearby. Some fear was now expressed that the same problems would occur with the retarded.

Other concerns were expressed by the parents of the retarded, and these were summarized at the time as follows:

1. The adverse terrain of Camp Tepee and its effect on the poorly coordinated or physically handicapped....

2. None of the directors or staff were knowledgeable of the problems of the retardates....

3. Bus transportation - With the retarded it would be necessary for someone to meet the bus at specified times.

4. Each of the groups at camp has to be financially self-sustaining or the group is dropped. There was a question

as to whether there would be a sufficient number of the retarded enrolled, especially since the cost of the camp plus transportation would be double that charged at the Kennedy Center Day Camp.

5. What effect would having the retarded enrolled at Camp Tepee have on parents sending normal children to this camp?

6. There were no indoor facilities at Camp Tepee and on rainy days this posed a problem in providing activities for the normal child. It was felt that a bigger problem would arise with mental retardates.

7. The activities at Camp Tepee included: boating, swimming, hiking, woodcraft, nature study, etc. It was wondered if any of the lower level retarded would be able to participate or even enjoy participating in such programs.

An attempt was made to resolve these problems by mutual discussion and the results were recorded in the following agreement reached by the representatives of the Parents association and the Y.M.C.A.:

1. Transportation: The group would meet at some central location such as the Kennedy Center to be picked up and dropped off for camp, alleviating any concern over parental delays.

2. Kennedy Center would aid in staff recruitment for the mentally retarded; salaries, however, would be a problem.

3. Kennedy Center would screen camp applicants to determine suitability for camp program (criteria to be determined).

4. Some arrangement would be made with the Center for rainy day activities.

5. Though the Board of Directors of the Camp had indicated that this program would be evaluated each week and

week and would be dropped if it was considered unfeasible to continue, the unit directors felt that this type of a situation would be totally unfair to staff members hired for the unit.

Agreement was then reached that should the unit start, it would continue as long as there was adequate enrollment.

Before the "Y" would make a final commitment, the following three things were requested:

1. That Kennedy Center staff, together with the "Y" Director, visit the camp to ascertain suitability of terrain and camp layout for such a program for mental retardates.

2. That both the Unit Director and Camp Counselor hired be knowledgeable and willing to work with mental retardates.

3. A reasonable guarantee that an adequate number of mental retardates would enroll to financially sustain the program.

On May 10, 1965, the Board agreed to enter into an arrangement with the Y.M.C.A. for a Day Camp Unit to be conducted at the "Y" Camp Tepee.

Because of the novelty of this program with the YMCA, the association decided also to maintain its own camp program. Selected children were to be sent to the "Y" camp and the association would continue its program at Pleasure Beach. Many parents voiced concern over the possible inexperience of personnel who would be available at the "Y" camp. The added cost of the program plus transportation charges provided a problem. The "Y" charges were $35.00 for a two-week period plus $5.00 for transportation.

Following all the deliberations and the oncoming close of the public schools, announcements were sent to parents of

all mentally retarded youngsters in the special classes in the city, regardless of whether they were members of the Parents association or not. The enrollment was somewhat disappointing. Twenty boys, 7 through 14, participated. At the Board of Directors meeting on June 14, 1965, the following minutes were recorded: "As there are so few reservations for the Summer Day Camp, the Camp Committee was authorized to work out necessary arrangements and if necessary, to allocate $1,000 to help in Kennedy Center's commitment to the Y.M.C.A."

The following report of the Special Unit at Camp Tepee, written by the Unit Director after the end of the camp season, summarizes the experiences that occurred and the variety of problems encountered:

"Report of Special Unit

"The Camp Tepee set-up provides a very good day camp routine and atmosphere. This influences the attitudes of the children in the Special Unit in a positive manner. The children seem to identify with something that most other normal children are doing and participating in by being near them at Camp Tepee. This would seem to help them feel more adequote about themselves as individuals, as well as in relation to others, by belonging to and participating in a system that is part of the normal world.

"A group security or unity seems to have been established that was not present at other Kennedy Center Day Camps. Much more in group participation was developed with the children in this setting.

"The counselors provided by Camp Tepee have been highly motivated, responsible and very sensitive to the needs of the children assigned to the Special Unit.

"Within the above setting, much has been accomplished in arts and crafts, group participation, athletic development and individual feelings of value.

"The swimming pool and wading pool have afforded an excellent opportunity for swimming and water play. This was a break in the general routine that was not offered in the past with the Kennedy Center Day Camps. Although the Kennedy Center had swimming facilities at Pleasure Beach, the facilities at the pool were much better and more adequate. The children, through the use of the pool, have made considerable progress in handling themselves in the water.

"Other facilities such as volleyball courts, tennis courts, softball field, etc., offered at Camp Tepee (although they could be duplicated to some degree at Pleasure Beach) were well laid out and very convenient. Also provided at Camp Tepee was a small playground that the children enjoyed very much during their free play period.

"One disadvantage to the daily routine was the scheduling of the pool. The only time that the Special Unit could have the use of the pool was during the lunch period of Camp Tepee. This necessitated the special group to eat their lunch quite late. Another disadvantage of scheduling the pool during the lunch hour, is that the pool staff was not available. This makes the routine especially difficult when a counselor is ill or cannot go in the pool. However, from time to time, some of the pool staff joined the group in the pool on their own.

"In addition, no provisions have been made for rainy days. On such days the Special Unit has to go to Kennedy Center's cottage at Pleasure Beach. This situation does not afford as good a camp experience as can be achieved at Camp Tepee.

"No adequate provisions are available for electrical outlets at the Unit site. This prohibits the use of a record player for rhythms, singing, and listening, which are an important phase of the program.

"Transportation has been a negative factor in relation to the children having to ride long hours on the bus and arriving at the camp quite late. In addition, transportation for these children requires special door-to-door service. This makes the trip a long one.

"Stricter screening of the children in relation to social adjustment and emotional maturity should be maintained. Although the day camp experience is supposedly good for certain individuals with social and emotional problems, these people are not good for the camp. The staff is not trained for such children. I would cite three children, two in particular, who required too much individual attention, thereby taking time from the others; and if it wasn't for the efforts of the counselors, would have succeeded in deteriorating the entire camp. In the case of one of these children, the group experience seemed to be too agitating.

"The normal routine of C.I.T. responsibility cannot be strictly adhered to, as the nature of these children requires the constant attention of all counselor personnel.

"Another factor to be considered is the counselor-camper ratio. Where the ratio is approximately 1 to 5, the operation can run smoothly throughout the day. However, adding one or two more children creates problems during the latter part of the day. Consequently, with the present enrollment of 1 to 7, the C.I.T.'s must assume a heavier responsibility in maintaining a good routine at the end of the day. This would suggest another counselor or a more mature C.I.T., so that a 1 to 5 ratio could be maintained during the latter part of the day.

"Some consideration should be given to the duration of the total summer camp time or to the length of stay for certain individuals. The fact that many of the children attend camp for the full eight weeks and the type of activity for

this unit is limited, they become too familiar with the camp routine by the end of the third period. The result being that they become quite restless. Subsequently, they easily become a source of irritation to the other children and thereby adversely affect the discipline of the unit. It is suggested, therefore, that either certain individuals be advised to skip a period or the length of camp time for the special unit be limited to three periods."

After this beginning and during the initial conferences for the 1966 camping season, some reticence was expressed by the association. The Y.M.C.A. Director of the Camp Program expressed the hope that the program would continue since the "Y" Board had approved the plan. The "Y" camp staff hoped to use the program for the retarded children to bolster their request within the Y.M.C.A. organization for expanding the resources of the camp. In initial meetings with the "Y" staff and the counselor who was to head the Special Unit, the Parent association representatives were somewhat hesitant about what they perceived as the " . . . cold and unenthusiastic attitude of the "Y" people." There was some degree of feeling about this, and the fact that the "Y" would provide transportation only on major bus routes. This would require parents to bring their children to a street corner on a bus route and to be there precisely when the bus was scheduled to return the children. Fees for the 1966 camp were projected as $20.00 per week, in two-week blocks, plus a $3.00 per week transportation fee. This was approximately double the previous Kennedy Center charges for camping with transportation provided gratis. When the actual camping season began, approximately ten youngsters appeared at the "Y" camp the first week.

At the conclusion of the season, a visit by the parent chairman to the "Y" Camp Unit resulted in a favorable impression of the quality of the programming that was being conducted. This was in turn transmitted to the members of

the "Y" Board and the parents of the association. All the experiences during the summer were considered positive and the feeling was that the program had been a huge success.

The Unit Director's Report of the 1966 Camping Program at Camp Tepee is included below as Appendix B.

With the advent of the 1967 season, expressions of a positive nature about the camper program at the "Y" prevailed, based on the previous years' experiences and successes. Since the simultaneously operated Kennedy Center Day Camp at Pleasure Beach (to be described in detail in the section of this monograph on recreation) had not exceeded seventeen participants, the Board of Directors voted to turn the total summer program over to the "Y" and only to conduct a part-time recreation program for those children or adults who could not find any other program services. The program at the "Y" Camp adopted a new name. It was called the Brave Unit. The average number of campers enrolled per period rose from 7 in 1966 to 13.7 in 1967.

In the 1967 "Y" Camp Director's Report, mention is made that the Braves had a very successful year and he made note of the fine contribution they made to the overall operations of the Camp.

For the 1968 program, the Braves Unit Director could report "wonderful cooperation from the counselor staff" and that a "good number of parents . . . seem to think it has been a very good year." He noted that "some sort of financial aid" should be considered for volunteers and counselors in training.

To summarize the events of the 1965 and subsequent camp seasons through 1968 as they pertain to the over-all Social and Rehabilitation Services Project (RD 1435-G) they could be described in a positive form as follows:

1. The program established rapport and a practical working relationship between two public agencies.

2. It provided the retarded with services on an equal and unsegregated basis, helping them to be with normal peer groups.

3. It reduced the duplication of facilities, staff, and equipment serving the needs of mentally retarded youngsters in the future.

IV. LEISURE TIME RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Throughout the year, recreation is an important need of the retarded. At any age, leisure and diversion, play and activity, are critical outlets for energy, are important sources of challenge, stimulation and learning. During the teens, recreational experiences draw the individual into relationships with others that may have enduring and lasting value.

The Parents and Friends association, through the Kennedy Center, sought to develop patterned programs of recreation for teenagers during the summer months and throughout the remainder of the year.

Teenage volunteer recreation programs were established at the Kennedy Center. Requests for a longer day for teenagers who were participating in the Day Care Services of the Center began to mount in numbers, as did requests for post-school-hour programs of a recreational nature for what was described as the "problem retarded" child. In 1964, teenage volunteers from a local synagogue began contributing their time and effort three days a week and thus made possible a later afternoon program of recreation.

These youngsters from the community worked under the supervision of the Center staff, including an arts and crafts instructor. Indoor and outdoor activities were scheduled. Older retardates from the Day Service and children presenting serious problems in the home were involved in the programs from 2:30 to 4:30 P.M., when they went home with transportation facilities arranged by the Center.

It is worth noting that the summary report on this program refers to an important side effect, namely, that the program provided relief to "several families who have been suffering from very trying times because of their children's

acting out, and the program may mean the difference between institutional placement or continuing in the community."

In January 1965, a major proposal was made by the Kennedy Center to the Fairfield Y.M.C.A. for a pilot operation of a half-day recreation and physical activity program that would supplement the half-day school attendance provided for the trainable youngsters of the communities of Fairfield and Trumbull. The association's objective was to arrange for the extension of the school day in Fairfield for trainable youngsters from Fairfield and Trumbull so that a full scale combined educational and recreational program for an entire day would be developed. Thus, if the Y.M.C.A. could provide a recreational program tied in with the classes in the school system, a full day's program would exist. An initial proposal for the cooperative use of facilities at recreational centers other than the "Y" had been refused.

The "Y" was approached with a request for a pilot program for the sixteen children attending the trainable classes at the Pequot School which served both Fairfield and Trumbull. The Kennedy Center would provide the physical facilities and the professional staff liaison necessary.

The arrangement for staff selection and payment projected in the proposal involved complicated arrangements among several public and private agencies. The youngsters were all members of special classes in the public school. The I.Q. range was from thirty to fifty, and they were deemed able to function well in group settings and to be able to benefit greatly from recreational activities.

Direct leadership of the groups was to be provided by an individual from the field of special education, and he was to have a paid assistant and to be helped by additional persons drawn in as volunteers. The Kennedy Center Project as a public agency was to provide consultation to the group leader

and to the Y.M.C.A. staff. Consultation would similarly be provided, according to the prospectus of the program, by the Fairfield and Trumbull School systems, other agencies in the public sphere.

Funds for the payment of staff were to be provided through the State Department of Education. Selection of staff would be influenced by the Y.M.C.A. which would provide approval in order to "assure compatibility with the policies and objectives of the Y.M.C.A. program."

Such a network of arrangements can almost provide a prototype of the manner in which the Project attempted to tie together for the improvement and development of services for the retarded a complex variety of public and private organizations. The focal point was a post-school recreational program for the trainable retarded. The contributing and supporting agencies included (1) the Project with its special, publicly supported program for improvement of services, (2) the Parents and Friends association of citizens interested in [illegible]ndation which housed the Project, (3) the Y.M.C.A. which is a community-based and community-wide recreation agency concerned with the general public's needs for social, recreational and physical activities, (4) the public school systems of two communities, and (5) the State Department of Education.

Thus, funds, staff, physical facilities, volunteers, arrangements for transportation, and procedures for supervision and coordination of activities were to be coordinated to provide a needed recreation program.

Effective in September 1966, the Trumbull Board of Education was to finance the total pilot program deemed both successful and effective. According to an informed parent,

> "This was a successful pilot program. The youngsters did beautifully in their school work and their personal life, and so it was decided to keep going in Fall 1965.

"This was planned to extend to other schools, for example, in Stratford where only a few hours of school are provided each day."

However, this hope that other school systems would adopt such a joint program failed to be realized, according to the same informant. An apparent lack of follow-up occurred. The necessary effort to stimulate cooperative programming in different communities between the public school systems and those agencies, often private and voluntary that provide recreational resources, occurred in Fairfield. It is a demonstration of what can occur. In this instance, the Project staff helped bring the joint program into being. Parallel efforts in the immediate area around Bridgeport did not, however, get sustained.

A related point concerns the question raised by an informant about the nature of the additional program provided. Recreation, it was pointed out, was merely a means to the end of a full school day for trainable youngsters. Other activities could be introduced equally well.

In 1966, the Kennedy Center Pleasure Beach Camp operated during the summer. With the beginning of the camping season, seventeen retarded participated. The individuals included groups designated as Kennedy Center campers and others designated as "enriched day care" campers. Day camp activities supplemented by a Saturday recreational program existed, and these included organized games, exploratory trips, and swimming sessions, fishing, and arts and crafts. With the cooperation of a faculty member from the University of Bridgeport, a special program of physical education existed. Students from the University joined in the program on a training basis. For this special physical education program, campers were joined by retarded from the Tri-Us group.

This program at Pleasure Beach Park occurred on grounds made available by the City of Bridgeport which made available four cottages. They were physically improved before the

Camp operated. Plumbing and electrical work had to be done, and this was in part helped by a donation of electrical equipment by a private electronics firm in the area. The physical rehabilitation of the buildings and grounds was also helped by another unit of the overall Kennedy Center program, namely, the Tri-Us trainees under the guidance of the Tri-Us Director.

Staff personnel numbered seven, five with certification as special education teachers, and one with a nursing background. Volunteers were high school girls. The combined total of staff and volunteers permitted an almost two-to-one counselor to camper ratio throughout the camping season.

The campers in this program included, in addition to teenagers, youngsters from six years of age up and at the other extreme, individuals as old as 28. The average age was, however, fourteen.

The special interest that this camping recreational program has derived from the great heterogeneity of the campers. The Director's report summarizes this as follows:

> Almost every area of exceptionality was represented. The emotionally disturbed, autistic, blind, and multiple handicapped youngsters were among our regular campers. . . . One of our youngsters was completely dependent and required constant individual supervision and attention. Many of our young campers were not toilet trained, thus requiring extra attention from the staff and volunteers.

That this group continued to be served was dramatic. The program continued inasmuch as the Bridgeport Y.M.C.A. Camp Tepee was limited in enrollment to 10 campers in 1966.

In 1967, the Kennedy Center did not operate a Camp Program at Pleasure Beach. Enrollment in 1966 at Pleasure

Beach had not exceeded an average of about 17 participants. Faced with these limited numbers, and on the basis of the apparent success of the Bridgeport "Y" program at Camp Tepee during the same summer, the Board of the Parents and Friends association voted to turn the total summer day camp over to the Y.M.C.A. For those children or adults who could find no other program services, a part-time recreation program was planned.

This part-time recreational program in 1967 consisted of a series of beach parties and field trips on Saturdays from the beginning of July to the end of August. This program of leisure activities was a continuation of an on-going program, made possible by the Kennedy Center's employment of a part-time Recreation Director and Assistant Director who handled leisure time activities for the retarded at all ages throughout the year. In 1967, the Kennedy Center Summer Recreation program consisted of a "variety of wholesome outdoor activities and learning experiences presented in an informal manner at a minimum cost." Various day trips occurred, including beach parties, a baseball game, a boat trip, and other activities on a day basis.

The programs in 1968 comprised many features. Monthly field trips to such facilities or events as baseball games, the circus, theater and ballet occurred. Monthly dances for young adults were held at the Bridgeport Regional Center. The local Musicians' Union donates an orchestra for these social affairs. Weekly bowling parties occurred. The Order of Alhambra, a Roman Catholic men's group, sponsors the bowling league, provides shirts and trophies, and contributes toward other expenses such as banquet costs.

Swimming at the local Y.M.C.A. and at the Bishop Shehan Center took place. An arts and crafts program on a weekly basis was attempted. Finally, physical fitness activities occurred every Saturday for the "young age group."

In 1968, a program of day trips on Saturdays was scheduled.

Since 1956, the Bridgeport Elks have sponsored annual Christmas parties for retarded youngsters in the community, and have covered the entire cost. At present in 1968, the party was held in conjunction with the Kennedy Center and the Bridgeport Regional Center and utilized the facilities of the local City Y.M.C.A. center.

The Elks have also conducted a swimming program during the Fall months for handicapped youngsters for about ten years, and retarded youngsters have participated. The organization also has contributed the cost of bowling trophies during the last two years.

APPENDIX A

KENNEDY CENTER DAY CAMP

Summary of Activities: July 31, 1964

Each day begins at 10:00 A.M. with an average of 19 to 20 children and 5 counselors, with the Pledge of Allegiance. Then each individual group goes to its own area and the children participate in morning exercises. This is based upon a follow-through of some of the routine done in school. Each child describes himself by telling his name and the type and color of clothing he is wearing. The child also names the day, month and date and tells about the weather. In addition, the child is asked to try and tell how many in the group are present and absent.

The schedule is broken down into five broad categories as follows:

1. Large muscle activities in group games and circle activities.
2. Small muscle activities such as small games, puzzles, bead stringing, take-apart toys, construction blocks, etc.
3. Arts and crafts
4. Rhythms such as listening and keeping time to music, marching, hopping, etc.
5. Nature study which includes walks, collecting items, discussing them, etc.

All the above items are covered each day except on Wednesday when a change of scene and routine is provided on our swim day at Pleasure Beach. Some instruction to help the children become accustomed to holding their face in the water is being provided. A cook-out is also held at this time.

Each child is being instructed in basic physical fitness activities such as: push-ups, sit-ups, etc., and regular calisthenics. This part of the program is arrived at helping the child follow directions and develop an awareness for some conscious control of the large muscle movements.

The children are also being instructed and evaluated in the basic techniques of games such as softball, volleyball, tether ball, badminton, etc. The aim in these activities is to help the child anticipate speed, distance and direction of the ball in receiving it and judging distance and direction in returning it. This also involves conscious control of the large muscles.

Control of large muscles and development of social skills is provided in our Tuesday, Thursday and rainy day routine of whole camp calisthenics, marching, skipping and clapping to music and large group games.

Arts and crafts, besides affording opportunities to make geometric cut-outs, bird nests, a mural with cut-out trees, leaves, birds and animals, a mural of leaf spatters, flowers, soap bottle figures, drums and paper cup maracas which are also used in rhythm activities; pillows, bean bags, etc., also help the child gain some proficiency in tracing, freehand drawing, coloring within specified areas, cutting and other visual-motor skills.

During a free activity time after lunch, the children find pleasure in busying themselves with regular puzzles, take-apart objects, construction blocks, peg boards and bead stringing. These items are also used to train visual motor coordination during planned activities which also includes records for rhythm practice. Opportunity for practice of social-skills are being provided for during lunch such as table manners, common courtesies, sharing activities with each group's planned routine, conformity with demands of maturity of each group, morning exercises and snack time before leaving camp at 3:00 P.M.

Jerome R. Derwallis
Camp Director

APPENDIX B

THE SPECIAL UNIT - 1966

The Special Unit of Camp Tepee has completed its second year of operation. This year, great strides were made to achieve a sound philosophy of the position of a Special Unit within the framework of a regular camp. A Special Unit operates as other units, utilizing all camp facilities, yet still maintains its individuality by not losing sight of the various abilities and limitations of its members. This philosophy was put into practice by extending the camp day to the regular time. Special door-to-door service was eliminated. The children rode the regular camp bus. This served as a positive effect for both the Special Unit children and the regular campers. This afforded all the chance to see and accept the children as individuals, rather than a label. This philosophy was also made clear during one of the camp's special events. The Special Unit participated in the Camp Carnival and did an excellent job. One comment sums up the goal the Special Unit was attempting to achieve. The comment was, "It goes to show how much these children can do."

Two new programs were initiated this year and should be continued. A sensory motor program, in connection with a physical fitness program was established. The goal of this program was to create and develop a better motor coordination, which is of vital importance to the retardate. In addition, a strong program of music and rhythms was initiated. Use of rhythm instruments, made by the children, records and tapes were used. A temporary electrical system was set up by our male counselor, but permanent electrical facilities are badly needed.

The staff was excellent and camp personnel were most cooperative and helpful. For example, the time and effort

given by our pool staff made it possible for us to boast of an excellent swimming program.

There is a need for a shelter area within the unit. On rainy days it is a scramble for cover. The practice of going off camp grounds was unsuccessful and therefore discontinued.

After this summer's operation, it is evident that the Special Unit, whose name should be changed next year, does have a place in a regular camp setting. It is hoped this program will continue and perhaps be expanded by the Y.M.C.A. and Kennedy Center, to meet the demands of those children who do not fit into the average group.

Respectfully submitted,

Eldwood Autuori
Unit Director